VFW BURIAL RITUAL

COMMANDER:

We are here assembled to pay our last tribute of respect to our departed comrade.

When the call of our country was heard, Comrade _____ answered; self was forgotten in the cause of the greater good. As a brave man, he marched away with an abiding faith in his god, his country and his flag.

The red of our country's flag was made redder still by his heroism; the white more stainlessly pure by the motives which impelled him; and in the starry field of our nation's glorious banner, the blue has been glorified by the service he has given for his American ideals.

The chaplain will invoke the divine blessing.

PRAYER

CHAPLAIN:

Almighty and Merciful God ! Father of all ! Admidst these monuments of the dead we see Thy hand.

As comrade after comrade departs we march on with the ranks grown thinner.

Help us to be faithful unto Thee and to one another.

We beseech Thee, look in mercy upon all of us here assembled and with Thine own tenderness console and comfort those bereaved by the hand of death.

Give them the "oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

Heavenly Father, bless our country with freedom, peace and righteousness, and through Thy Sovereign and Holy Spirit's favor, may we all meet at last before Thy Throne of Grace in Heaven. And to Thy Great Name shall be praised forever and ever.

COMMANDER:

One by one, as the years roll on we are called upon to full fill those sad duties of respect to our departed comrades.

The present, full of the cares that beset all nations whether engaged in war or peace, fades away as we look back on the day this comrade left his home to defend this country. Imbued by a spirit of devotion and inspired by an undying love of this land, he gladly went forth and joined with comrades both young and old to preserve our heritage of freedom.

We trust that the example set by our comrade will prove a glorious beacon to the youth of our country, who may be called to uphold the honor of our flag at anytime.

As the years roll on, we too, shall be laid to rest and our souls follow the long column to the realms above, as All-enfolding death, hour by hour, shall mark his recruits.

Comrades, let us so live that when the Keeper of the Eternal Records shall have called our names for the last time, those we leave behind may say of us, as we now say of this comrade "here lies all that is mortal of a true-hearted comrade and a fearless defender of this country and flag."

CHAPLAIN:

The march of our comrade is over and he lieth down in the House appointed for all the living.

This grave reminds us of the frailty of human life and the tenure by which we hold our own. "In such an hour as ye think not, the final summons may come which no one disobeys."

OPTIONAL.

ARMY

It seem fitting that we should leave our comrade of the Army to rest under the arching sky, as he did when he pitched his tent or laid down in days gone by, weary and footsore by the roadside, or on the field of battle.

AIRFORCE

Our departed comrades of the Air Force may no longer fly through enemy fire to drop their bombs or fight off the enemy attack. May each of us, when our voyages and battles of life are over, find a welcome in that region of the blest where there is no storm tossed sky, nor scorching battlefield.

NAVY

Our departed comrades of the Navy no longer hear the sound of the waves or float upon the bosom of the deep, no longer sail beneath peaceful skies, nor are driven before the angry storm. May each of us, when our voyages and battles of life are over, find a welcome in that region of the blest where there is no storm tossed sea, nor scorching battlefield.

ALL

Our comrade is in the hands of our Heavenly Father and "God giveth His beloved sleep". He will be laid to rest, but let us cherish his virtues and learn to imitate them, reminded by the place he fills no more, that our ranks are thinning. Let each one be so loyal to every virtue, so true to every friendship, so faithful in the remaining marches, that he will be ready to fall out and take his place in the great review hereafter; not in doubt, but with faith that the merciful Captain of our Salvation will call him to that fraternity which on earth and in heaven remains unbroken.

Most merciful Father, we commend our departed into your hands. We are full of hope that our departed will rise on the last day with all who have died believing in You. We thank You for all gifts given during our departed's earthly life.

O Father, in your great mercy, accept our prayer that the Gates of Paradise may be opened for your servant. In our Turn, may we too be comforted by our faith in You. AMEN.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (OPTIONAL)

COMMITAL

Dust shall be returned to dust and the spirit to God who gave it.

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust and the spirit unto the Great Spirit that watcheth over the lives and souls of men. AMEN.